

Qualitative Interviews with researchers with weak institutional ties

Warm-up phase

1. Could you please briefly introduce yourself and describe your role, position, field you are working in?
2. Could you please tell me a little about your current publishing activities from the authors point of view (*frequency, general approach, strategies in choosing a venue*).

Main part 1. – Attitude and perception towards OA publishing

1. Would you say that you have a clear understanding of what OA is and its differences from closed access?
2. Is publishing OA important to you?
 - *Follow-up if yes: Is it important for you career or personal convictions?*
3. Is OA publishing widely accepted and actively promoted in your work environment and within your career trajectory?
4. *How do you perceive OA publishing in terms of inclusivity and diversity?*

Main part 2. Journal publishing. Have you ever published in an OA journal?

Yes, I have published in OA journal

1. How would you describe your experience with the OA publishing process?
2. Have you encountered any challenges when publishing in open access?
3. Have you faced any specific obstacles or barriers related to OA publishing due to your affiliation status?
 - *Follow-up if yes: Do you believe that if you had a strong affiliation, such difficulties would never occur?*
4. How do you perceive the role of institutional affiliation in the context of OA publishing?
 - *Follow-up: Do you think researchers with weaker institutional ties face additional challenges compared to those with stronger affiliations?*
5. Before relocating to Germany/retiring/ becoming an independent researcher, have you published OA?
 - *Follow-up if yes: Did you notice any differences in your publishing experience during those periods?*
6. Have you ever applied to present or participate in a scientific conference within your field?
 - *Follow-up if yes: How was your experience?*

- *Do you believe that submitting a manuscript under an independent researcher affiliation would influence the conference committee's decision?*

7. Based on your experience publishing in open access, do you have any suggestions to enhance the process and ensure smoother functioning?

- *Follow-up: Have you encountered any initiatives or programs aimed at supporting researchers with weak affiliations in getting their research published?*

No, I have never published in OA journal

1. Why? Are there any specific reasons for this?
2. Have you ever thought that publishing OA with your current affiliation status would be problematic?
 - *Follow-up if yes: what made you think this way?*
3. Have you ever started the process of publishing OA or considered such journal for your research output dissemination?
 - *Follow-up if yes: What was the reason for this?*
4. Have you applied to present or participate in a scientific conference in your field?
 - *Follow-up if yes: How was your experience?*
 - *Follow-up if no: What was a reason of that?*
 - *Follow-up: Do you think your current affiliation could influence conference committee decision?*
5. What preconditions must be fulfilled so that you would publish your paper OA?
6. How do you perceive the current landscape of open access publishing, particularly in terms of inclusivity and diversity?

Main part 3. Practice. Self-archiving. Have you ever deposited a paper to a repository?

Yes, I have deposited one of my papers into an institutional repository

1. How was your experience?
 - *Follow-up: Have you faced any difficulties with depositing your paper?*
2. Have you faced any specific obstacles or barriers to depositing your paper into a repository due to your affiliation status?
3. Have you ever deposited your research on a preprint server?
 - *Have you faced any specific obstacles or barriers to depositing your paper on a preprint server due to your affiliation status?*
4. Having deposited your work, do you have any recommendations to improve the process and make it function more smoothly?

No, I have not deposited any of my papers into an institutional repository

1. *Why? Could you please provide a specific reason for this?*

Main part 4. Actions needed

1. Given the constantly evolving nature of OA publishing, with new business models emerging, journals changing their policies, and OA platforms being launched, do you feel well-informed about the process and the available options for OA publishing?
 - *Follow-up:* What support would you appreciate in this matter?